

WE CLAIM:

1. A network bridge having a malware scanner.

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2. A network bridge as claimed in claim 1, comprising a data packet analyser operable to identify data packets received by said network bridge at least a portion of which are to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

10 3. A network bridge as claimed in claim 2, wherein said data packet analyser identifies data packets having a predetermined network layer protocol as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

15 4. A network bridge as claimed in claim 3, wherein said predetermined network layer protocol is one or more of:

TCP/IP;

IPX;

SNA; and

Appletalk.

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5. A network bridge as claimed in claim 2, wherein said data packet analyser identifies data packets having a predetermined application layer protocol as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

25 6. A network bridge as claimed in claim 5, wherein said predetermined application layer protocol is one or more of:

SMTP;

FTP;

HTTP;

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SMB; and

NFS.

7. A network bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein said malware scanner is operable to concatenate portions of a data file from a plurality of data packets to form a data file to be scanned.

5 8. A network bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein said malware scanner is operable to scan for one or more of:

computer viruses;

Trojans;

worms;

10 banned computer programs; and

banned words within e-mail messages.

9. A network bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein data that has been scanned by said malware scanner is forwarded to its intended recipient.

15 10. A network bridge as claimed in claim 1, wherein said malware scanner is formed of one or more of:

a software based malware scanner; and

a hardware based malware scanner.

20 11. A network bridge operable to intercept one or more data packets, to forward at least a portion of said data packets to a malware scanner for scanning, and to forward data from said data packets after scanning to its intended recipient.

25 12. A network bridge as claimed in claim 11, comprising a data packet analyser operable to identify data packets received by said network bridge at least a portion of which are to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

30 13. A network bridge as claimed in claim 12, wherein said data packet analyser identifies data packets having a predetermined network layer protocol as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

14. A network bridge as claimed in claim 13, wherein said predetermined network layer protocol is one or more of:

TCP/IP;
IPX;
SNA; and
Appletalk.

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15. A network bridge as claimed in claim 12, wherein said data packet analyser identifies data packets having a predetermined application layer protocol as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

10 16. A network bridge as claimed in claim 15, wherein said predetermined application layer protocol is one or more of:

SMTP;
FTP;
HTTP;
15 SMB; and
NFS.

17. A malware scanner operable to receive at least a portion of one or more data packets intercepted by a network bridge, to concatenate said data packets into a data
20 file to be scanned and to forward said data file after scanning to its intended recipients via said network bridge.

18. A malware scanner as claimed in claim 17, wherein said malware scanner is operable to scan for one or more of:

25 computer viruses;
Trojans;
worms;
banned computer programs; and
banned words within e-mail messages.

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19. A malware scanner as claimed in claim 17, wherein said malware scanner is formed of one or more of:

a software based malware scanner; and
a hardware based malware scanner.

20. A method of malware scanning comprising the steps of:

receiving data packets at a network bridge;

sending at least a portion of said data packets from said network bridge to a

5 malware scanner;

concatenating data received by said malware scanner to form a data file to be scanned;

scanning said data file with said malware scanner; and

forwarding said data file after scanning via said network bridge to its intended

10 recipient.

21. A method as claimed in claim 20, comprising the step of identifying data packets received by said network bridge that are to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

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22. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein data packets having a predetermined network layer protocol are identified as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

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23. A method as claimed in claim 22, wherein said predetermined network layer protocol is one or more of:

TCP/IP;

IPX;

SNA; and

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Appletalk.

24. A method as claimed in claim 21, wherein data packets having a predetermined application layer protocol are identified as to be passed to said malware scanner for scanning.

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25. A method as claimed in claim 24, wherein said predetermined application layer protocol is one or more of:

SMTP;

FTP;

HTTP;
SMB; and
NFS.

5 26. A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein said scanning scans for one or more
of:

computer viruses;

Trojans;

worms;

10 banned computer programs; and
banned words within e-mail messages.

27. A method as claimed in claim 20, wherein said malware scanner is formed of
one or more of:

15 a software based malware scanner; and
a hardware based malware scanner.